

Managers
3 Feb

Price 10

Amos A. Phelps

118 Nassau Street

New York

Managers Feb. 2/46.

Wm Goodell

Thursday Morn 8. 3^d

Well — I have written, and the result you have in the two sheets enclosed — Hastily drawn, especially the latter part of it — Longer than I intended, but have not time to make it shorter. Perhaps you can make something out of it, in some way. — It will, at least, serve to give you some of my views on the Subject. You can do with it as you think best, & use more or less, or none, of it, as you have occasion.

You will find, if I mistake not, that while its adoption by the Convention would not commit it, in favor — either of Sectarian exclusion nor of Union liberality, it shows, that, by neither theory are we bound to receive Slave holders into Church Membership.

If we may exclude Christians, then we may exclude Christian Slave holders if there are such.

If we may receive none but those who give Scriptural evidence of being Christians — then we must hold Slave holders, at arm's length, until they repent of their Slave holding, & bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

The Union theory, as I hold it, (in distinction from the theory of Gerrit Smith) so far from throwing responsibility off from the Church, brings it down with redoubled weight — So far from opening the doors to every body, it bolts them close against all who do not present the Scriptural Credentials. — So far from destroying Church discipline, it lays a solid foundation for it, & elevates to the Bible marks, the Standard of Admission. — I could have shown this, in the enclosed, but did not wish to incorporate an Eulogy on Unionism into the Address of this Missionary Convention. Yours truly, W. Goodell

I cannot think we are very widely apart from each other. — In drafting this part of the Address, the problem will be, how to say the right thing, and to say it so as to secure the Assent of such ultra Unionists as myself and the members Corporate of the American Board (!!!) and, at the same time secure also the Assent of those who are still accustomed to the usages of the existing sects, such as those that sustain the American Board. — A year ago, I should have despaired of accomplishing such a task. But the full, clear, & distinct recognition of the doctrine of Christian Unity applied practically to the matter of Church membership, by such a grave, Conservative body as the American Board, should relieve us, I think, of all panics, on the score of ultraism; in that direction, provided their doctrine be Scriptural, as I think it is. — To reconcile this with our opposition to the misapplication of their doctrine to the case of Slave holders is, I think, no very difficult task, if we only adhere to the Scriptures, in determining what constitutes credible or (as you have it) Creditable evidence of Christian Character. Without such Creditable evidence, we have no ground for considering & treating any persons as Christians — this possibly (!) they may be! — Christ does not require us to receive all who, we think, may... possibly... be Christians, but all who give clear & intelligible evidence, that ~~possibly~~, they are such. — Positives, & not negatives, should be the ground of our judgment. — I will try my hand at drafting the portion in question, before, I close this Letter. —

Oneida, Ontario Co. (N.Y.) Feb 2. 1846
Monday.

Bro Phelps.

Yours of 26th is at hand. — I am greatly re-
-joiced at the prospect of your attending the Missionary Con-
-vention at Syracuse, and preparing the documents for that
-occasion. — This is as it should be — & what will be expected
of you, as being more thoroughly acquainted with the whole
Ground than any one else; — to say nothing, here, in repetition
of the other important reasons suggested in my former Letter.

I feel much relieved, now, of the anxiety I have felt re-
-specting the Convention — and the more so, as my own Circumstances
at present, are such as to preclude the possibility of my doing
justice to the preparation of such documents myself, and may
perhaps prevent even my personal attendance at the Convention,
tho I am anxious to be there, & shall be, if possible.
But the prevalence of a frightful epidemic among us (the
malignant erysipelas) has occupied nearly all my thoughts and
time, for weeks past, in attending the Sick, and dying, and
conducting religious exercises (commonly preaching) on funeral
occasions. — My own family has been visited with
two or three attacks, from which they are all now
recovered, unless my own severe Cold and hoarseness, yes-
terday & to-day (a premonitory symptom frequently) be
considered an exception. —

Your Article in the January Reporter is a good
one, and I like your plan of an Address for the Con-
-vention. — If there be any thing that I should criticize or
-question, ^{in your January Number} it is on the point you have requested me to
write upon, for the Address, viz: Church discipline. I
am not quite certain that we exactly agree. And yet